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Former AmeriCorps Commission Chairman Barred from Doing Business with the Federal Government

Washington, DC – Muasau Tofili, former Chairman of the Board of the American Samoa Special Services Commission (Commission), has been debarred from doing business with the Federal government for one year. Mr. Tofili, who in September of 2012 became an Associate Judge of the High Court of American Samoa, pocketed more than \$2,400 by overcharging the government for hotel expenses.

The Commission was funded with taxpayer dollars by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). An audit and investigation conducted in 2010 by the CNCS Office of Inspector General revealed widespread misappropriation and abuse of funds at the Commission, including multiple charges of personal vacation travel by Commission members and executives. The probe led to the dissolution of the Commission and the prosecution and conviction of the Commission's Executive Director, Mine Pase, who was sentenced last year to serve 14 months in prison for her role in stealing over \$325,000 in AmeriCorps grant funds. As part of that inquiry, the CNCS Office of Inspector General determined that Judge Tofili overcharged the government for travel and lodging during a four night stay in New York City to attend CNCS's national conference in June 2010.



Debarment protects public funds by preventing the government from doing business with an individual or organization determined to lack honesty or integrity. In a letter notifying Judge Tofili of the decision to debar him, Douglas H. Hilton, Director of CNCS's Office of Accountability and Oversight, explained the basis of the decision:

"As both a Board Member and as Chairman of the Samoa Commission, one of your basic responsibilities was to oversee and ensure the proper expenditure by the Samoa Commission of CNCS AmeriCorps grant funds. . . . As an agency of the Federal Government, CNCS has a duty to protect the public interest by ensuring the integrity of its programs. This is done by conducting business only with responsible persons. Your admitted receipt of Federal funds to which you were not entitled, while you held a fiduciary position as a Commissioner of the Samoa Commission, is of so serious or compelling a nature that it affects your present responsibility to enter into transactions with the Federal Government."

Judge Tofili chose not to contest the debarment. An individual or organization debarred by one Federal agency cannot do business with any other Federal agency during the period of debarment. Public notice of the debarment can be found at www.sam.gov. The CNCS Office of Inspector General's report on its audit of the American Samoa Special Service Commission is available at <http://www.cncsoig.gov/sites/default/files/11-06.pdf>